blue drum agency
advancing cultural rights, creativity and resilience in communities

Small Change

2024 Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council (dlr) Creative Ireland Bursaries

Title: Ennel and Inagh Tour [Photo: V. Gelūnienė]

Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council's County Development Plan 2022-2028 highlights proximity and walkability in neighborhood development; the 10-minute neighbourhood principle. Interestingly, the same principle also guided the 2023 Creative Places research, undertaken by Blue Drum, about public space in the 1970s estates of Loughlinstown and Ballybrack.

Among its research findings was a weakening of community identity from a stronger historical sense of belonging, and an uncovering of its unique public housing architectural model. This model, designed by dlr architect Herbert Unger and inspired by the 1929 Redburn neighborhood in New Jersey, shaped the Courts into pedestrian-friendly spaces separated from car traffic, featuring green spaces for recreation. This model, if re-enhanced, still has potential to refine the 10-minute neighbourhood concept to a 1-minute neighbourhood scale.

To keep momentum on the renewal of public spaces, Blue Drum applied and was successful in the dlr Creative Ireland bursary award. Its project, Small Change, took place from June until November 2024. The 1978 residential courtyards of Ennel and Inagh were chosen for their small scale and distinctive archways that facilitate community interaction. Blue Drum's artists Ed Carroll and Vita Gelūnienė collaborated with Southside Partnership, dlr Women's Collective, Holly House and Loughlinstown Estate Management.

Title: Ennel and Inagh Cake [Photo: V. Gelūnienė]

Objectives:

1. Engage local resident and community organisations through door-to-door conversations and follow-up workshops
2. Create an imagining ‘prototype’ for both Courts through a mapping exercise
3. Share the process and outcomes with a wider group of interest using the form of hospitality and community tour.

Community engagement and roll-out:

-Distribution of information leaflets;
-Trust-building meetings between artists, residents and local leaders;
-Workshop exploring what works and what is not working in how public space functions;
-Documentation of key issues;
-Development of a community-led tour.

Community art roll-out:

The ‘prototype’ developed by the artists in response to what they heard took the form of a walking tour around the Courts. It took place on September 19, 2024. Twenty five people attended despite a Yellow Weather Warning. Together, the tour explored the 1970s architecture, celebrated residents' preservation of open archways, highlighted women's leadership through the role of women in summer projects and the dlr Women’s Collective, and discussed community resilience and residents' successful efforts to maintain open archways, contrasting with other courts that closed them due to anti-social behavior. The tour included a special tribute to Mary McCawley, a recently deceased community leader, with local resident Jimmy Kelly who engraved her name on an existing memorial stone in her honor.

Outputs:

-Creation of a community-led tour;

-Drafting proposal for future enhancement of five Courts;
-Engagement of 40 residents, 5 organisations and community leaders with active participation of 25 from the Courts and dlr County Council.

Impact:

The project successfully:
1. Amplified resident and community organisation voices;
2. Uncovered unique heritage aspects of the social housing and landscape;
3. Identified public spaces requiring enhancement;
4. Integrated new residents, as evidenced by positive feedback.

Unexpected result:

The project generated political engagement and there was a follow-up meeting with Councillors. This led to a Motion and question tabled at dlr Council November meeting. At that meeting there was a commitment from Sandra Kelly, :dlr Senior Community Officer, to:

- Meet with community groups and residents;
- Organize walkability audit of Courts paths; and
- Prioritize locations needing attention

Future direction

- Focus on enabling each Court to imagine how to renew its public spaces;
- Address current low energy in community engagement;
- Focus on motivating people through creative actions for design;
- Identify core values in community, solidarity, equality; environment and hope.

Recommendations

-Maintain focus on small, manageable changes that can create generate resident-led action for public space enhancement;
-Keep focus on small, manageable changes;
-Support official recognition of architectural and cultural heritage;

References:

-dlr Development Plan 2022-2028. See Chapter 4. Neighbourhood: People, Homes and Place. Link
-Creative Places Loughlinstown And Ballybrack.Link
-Community Tour. Link

-Report text prepared by E. Carroll and V. Gelūnienė

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Publicity:

Ballybrack Notes

Despite the weather, residents of Ballybrack and Loughlinstown gathered recently for the inaugural "Ennel and Inagh Courts Tour," part of the 2024 DLR and Creative Ireland Bursary, writes Rachel Cunningham.

The event, organised with locals, by community artists Ed Carroll and Vita Gelūnienė, highlighted the unique architectural design and community spirit of these 1970s housing estates.

Inspired by the 1929 Redburn neighborhood in New Jersey, DLR architect Herbert Unger's design created an urban garden neighbourhood with footway adjacent to a shared courtyard with access by cars at the back. The tour showcased the residents' commitment to maintaining open, vibrant spaces, contrary to other areas that closed off its arches.

It also paid tribute to community member Mary McCawley and emphasized the strong role of community development and women illustrated by Sharon Perry in the work of DLR Women's Collective. The evening finished with a meeting of neighbours, the tasting of Ennel & Inagh cake, and hospitality of Loughlinstown

Dubin Gazette [link] [4-10-2024]

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO IMPROVE
ONLY ONE-MINUTE FROM YOUR HOUSE?
LET'S DO IT!
[JUNE - OCTOBER 2024]
We are artists Ed Carroll and Vita Gelūnienė who invite to meet neighbours living in Inagh and
Ennel Court to share their stories, views and visions of their living environment. Next
Wednesday (June 12) we'll be around knocking on doors and listening to what people have to
say in answer to these questions:
What do you value about Ennel or Inagh?
How do you use the public space that is just one-minute from your house?
What would you change about your public space next to your house?
Ed and Vita are artists who are invited by DLR Art's Office and Southside Partnership to make
an action in the public space of Inagh and Ennel that would resonate the needs of local residents.
087 2334931
dlr
Creative Communities

What do you value about Ennel or Inagh?
How do you use the public space that is just one-minute from your house?
What would you change about space next to your house?
We, artists Ed Carroll and Vita Gelūnienė, would wish to connect again with your organization on Inagh and Ennel Court. Do you have any memories, views, or images of the living environment? On this Wednesday, we'll go about knocking on doors and hearing what folks have to say.
Ed and Vita are artists who are supported by DLR Arts Office and the Southside Partnership to create an action in the public area that addresses the concerns of local inhabitants.
087 2334931
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Creative Communities